



HISTORY, HIGHLIGHTS, AWARDS • 1977-2009

1977: Co-founders Lowell Bergman, Dan Noyes, and David Weir open office in downtown Oakland.

1978: CIR's first major investigations appear in magazines such as *New Times* and *Mother Jones*, including "The Party's Over," exploring how members of the Black Panther Party degenerated into a criminal gang. *The Wall Street Journal* editorial page praises the story.

1979: Several CIR magazine stories win major journalism awards. "The Boomerang Crime" explains how U.S. companies ship banned pesticides to the developing world and then the poisons return as residues in imported food. It wins a National Magazine Award for Reporting Excellence as part of a package of stories appearing in *Mother Jones*. "The Most Captive Consumers" explores the faulty manufacturing of wheelchairs in *The Progressive* magazine. It wins a National Press Club award. CIR's first story for national television appears on ABC's *20/20* newsmagazine detailing how the fundraising arm for the United Nations-sponsored International Year of the Child acted as a front for gun-running and drug-dealing.

1980: "Operation Wigwam," is CIR's expose of how U.S. officials covered up the possible health effects of a 1955 underwater atomic test off the coast of San Diego. The story is CIR's first national multimedia investigation, with a lengthy article appearing in *New West* magazine and a television version airing afterward on ABC's *20/20*.

1981: CIR publishes the book *Circle of Poison*, the story of the pesticide dumping scandal reported in 1979's "The Boomerang Crime." The book version unexpectedly makes headlines in dozens of countries, is translated into 10 languages and sparks debate in Congress and the United Nations. "Citizen Scaife," an expose of one of America's most powerful and secretive public opinion molders, appears in *The Washington Post* and the *Columbia Journalism Review* and wins an Investigative Reporters and Editors Award.

1982: "The Illusion of Safety" appears in *Mother Jones* magazine, revealing that systematic fraud in scientific testing has led to the widespread marketing of drugs, pesticides and consumer products that had never proven to be safe. The report wins Investigative Reporters and Editors, Sigma Delta Chi, and other awards. CIR releases its first book *Nuclear California*, which includes five years of investigation into nuclear accidents, spying on nuclear critics, and nuclear terrorism. CIR begins a multiyear collaboration with the CBS program *60 Minutes* with a story "The Bad Drug" that

examines the use of the hypertension drug Selacryn, even though the manufacturer knew it had serious side-effects.

1983: A CIR report in *Oceans* magazine reveals a 30-year history of radiation accidents in the world's nuclear-powered navies, sparks a worldwide controversy, and wins a World Affairs Council International Journalism Award.

1984: In front-page stories in the *Los Angeles Times* and *The Washington Post*, CIR reveals a plot by the late Salvadoran death squad and rightist leader Roberto D'Aubuisson to assassinate U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering. ABC's *World News Tonight* broadcasts a series in collaboration with CIR exposing serious reliability problems with the Pershing II missile and revealing that the Army withheld test data for fear of jeopardizing the deployment of the missile. CIR begins its extensive exposure of the ruthless and illegal rental practices of a German landlord operating in several U.S. cities. These stories would culminate in a 1985 report on *60 Minutes* ("World's Worst Landlord?"), the bankruptcy of the landlord's empire, and his suicide.

1985: The Paris daily newspaper *Liberation* and National Public Radio's *All Things Considered* report on CIR's investigation of how the National Endowment for Democracy secretly channeled U.S. tax dollars to a right-wing French student organization linked to an extremist, paramilitary movement outlawed in 1982. The story prompts congressional action. *The Quill*, in a cover story, and newspapers nationwide publish "*Fit to Be Tied*," the story of how the Reagan administration's sweeping censorship program had been expanded, not rescinded, as the press had reported. In the *Los Angeles Times* and *The New Republic*, CIR documents links between Salvadoran death squads and drug smuggling.

1986: On CBS' *60 Minutes* ("The Dirtiest River") and in newspaper stories, CIR reports on how polluters along the U.S.-Mexico border have turned the New River into a flowing dump of toxics and sewage. CIR releases *Yakuza* on organized crime and the far right in Japan. Blacklisted for five years by Japanese publishers, the book is translated into seven languages and wins an Investigative Reporters and Editors award.

1987: A series of CIR stories on KRON-TV in San Francisco and in the daily press reveals the FBI spied on critics of the Reagan administration foreign policy, prompting national media and Congressional attention. In *The Nation* magazine, CIR documents a new scandal – the export of toxic wastes to the Third World, a story that will become CIR's first national television documentary three years later: *Global Dumping Ground*. In the *Columbia Journalism Review* and CIR's publication *The Electronic Sweatshop*, CIR exposes the health hazards involved in modern office work and the high-tech industry.

1988: CBS' *60 Minutes* broadcasts "*Ryan of the FBI*," CIR's story on the firing of agent John Ryan for refusing to conduct a domestic security/terrorism investigation of pacifist dissidents. CIR releases a series of stories on secrecy, freedom of information and government censorship and wins several honors for this work.

1989: In the first of a series of stories on the crisis in U.S. health care, CIR publishes the magazine investigation *"Unsurance"* that reveals how insurance companies increasingly fail to pay for promised coverage. A CIR expose on the dangers of generic drugs wins a National Press Club Award.

1990: CIR produces its first independent television documentary, *"Global Dumping Ground,"* on the international traffic in hazardous waste. Reported by Bill Moyers, the one-hour documentary opens the new season on the PBS series *Frontline*, sparks federal investigations and is broadcast in at least 18 nations.

1991: CIR's second documentary, *"The Great American Bailout,"* airs on the PBS series *Frontline* and reveals the government's bungled bailout and cover-up of the savings and loan crisis. The program prompts headlines and congressional action and wins George Polk and Investigative Reporters & Editors awards, among others.

1992: *"The Best Campaign Money Can Buy,"* a CIR investigation and *Frontline* national television documentary, examines the top donors to the 1992 presidential campaign and wins an Alfred I. DuPont-Columbia University Award. Two other CIR *Frontline* documentaries *"Your Loan Is Denied"* and *"The Politics of Power"* explore the practice of "red lining" and mortgage-lending discrimination and the failure of U.S. energy policy.

1993: *"The Heartbeat of America,"* a CIR investigation for *Frontline*, reveals the decisions by General Motors that hurt its workers and delayed development of electric vehicles.

1994: *"School Colors,"* a CIR two-and-one-half hour television documentary for *Frontline* that examines education and race at an urban high school, wins CIR's second duPont-Columbia Award. *"Charting Diet Aids Danger"* explains how a common amphetamine-like drug may lead to strokes, for the *New York Daily News* and Fox Television's *Front Page*.

1995: *"Who's Watching the Watchdog"* examines the practices of the Better Business Bureau and wins a National Press Club Award for Consumer Reporting. *"Rush Limbaugh's America"* examines for *Frontline* the rise of the right-wing radio host.

1996: CIR works on three different documentaries for *Frontline*: *"So You Want to Buy A President?,"* *"Why America Hates the Press,"* and *"The Long March of Newt Gingrich."*

1997: "Hot Guns," a CIR investigation of the cheap handgun industry, appears on *Frontline* and wins an Emmy. A companion story appears in the magazine *U.S. News & World Report*. *Secrets*, a book examining U.S. government secrecy, wins an Investigative Reporters and Editors Award.

1999: "Justice for Sale," a co-production with PBS *Frontline*, told the story of how Louisiana residents fought in the courts the construction of a pollution-producing factory supported by Gov. Mike Foster, only to have the state Supreme Court thwart future legal opposition to chemical plants. Following the broadcast and after learning that CBS News was about to air its own version of the story, Foster stunned business

leaders by renouncing his policy of attracting polluting industry to Louisiana's "cancer alley."

2002: A groundbreaking CIR report detailing the involvement of multi-national tobacco companies in smuggling of cigarettes into Colombia appeared in *The Nation* and on the PBS television program *NOW with Bill Moyers*. The investigation directly inspired new but ultimately unsuccessful federal legislation, the Tobacco Smuggling Eradication Act.

2005: In "No Place to Hide," CIR and *Washington Post* reporter Robert O'Harrow, Jr. explained how the government was teaming up with the emerging "data mining" industry to monitor Americans as part of the war on terror. The investigation resulted in a book, Emmy-nominated ABC News documentary and one-hour public radio report. One of the leading data companies went public with a call for more government regulation of its own industry, and Congress held two hearings on privacy, specifically mentioning CIR's reporting. The same year, *Reasonable Doubt*, a CNN documentary, revealed that FBI crime labs used faulty forensic science for more than 30 years, sending countless people to prison based on flawed evidence. CIR associate Robin Mejia received the prestigious 2006 Livingston Award for Young Journalists for her reporting.

2006: "Conflicts on the Bench," a series for Salon.com, revealed that two of President Bush's nominees for the nation's second highest bench had violated federal law and the judicial code of conduct by presiding over multiple cases involving companies in which they owned stock. One judge withdrew his nomination; prominent senators, citing CIR's reporting, opposed the other, who was left hanging at the end of the congressional session. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts ordered a review of ethics policies and the judiciary mandated use of computer software to screen for conflicts of interest.

2007: The book *Exposed: The Toxic Chemistry of Everyday Products and What's at Stake for American Power* by Mark Schapiro shows how the European Union is demanding that multinationals manufacture safer products, while products developed and sold in the United States are increasingly linked to serious health hazards, and are banned from Europe and other parts of the world. Schapiro spoke about his reporting to numerous legislative bodies and industry groups. CIR's independent documentary *Banished*, which revisited three towns in the present day that, between 1860s and 1920s, had violently expelled their African American residents, premiered at the 2007 Sundance Film Festival, went on to win numerous awards, and aired on PBS *Independent Lens* in 2008.

2008: Robert Rosenthal named CIR Executive Director. CIR partners for the first time with NPR News to produce the Secret Money Project, an ongoing election season series documenting the impact and influence of independent groups on the presidential and senate races. The Chauncey Bailey Project, a collaboration of more than two dozen reporters, photographers and editors from print, broadcast and electronic media, with Robert Rosenthal serving as executive editor, looks into the circumstances surrounding the assassination of *Oakland Post* reporter Chauncey Bailey. The project reveals widespread corruption in the Oakland Police Department

and leads to numerous investigations of the OPD. The project won awards from Investigative Reporters and Editors, Online News Association, and National Association of Black Journalists, among others.

2009: With major funding from three foundations, CIR launches California Watch, the largest investigative team focused on the state. Initial stories are carried by over 30 print, broadcast and online outlets in California and partnerships with KQED San Francisco, AP Exchange, and New America Media bring the stories to millions more citizens, and in multiple languages.